DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 478 283 UD 035 811

AUTHOR	Pareja, Amber Stitziel, Lewis, Dan A.
TITLE	The Impact of Welfare Reform on Academic Outcomes: Does Parental Work Boost Grades? Institute for Policy Research Working Paper.
INSTITUTION	Northwestern Univ., Evanston, IL. Inst. for Policy Research.
REPORT NO	IPR-WP-02-33
PUB DATE	2002-11-00
NOTE	26p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Institute for Policy Research, Northwestern University, 2040 Sheridan Road, Evanston, IL 60208-4100. Tel: 847-491-3395; Fax: 847-491-9916; e-mail: ipr@northwestern.edu; Web site: http://www.northwestern.edu/IPR.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research (143)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Academic Achievement; Achievement Gains; *Child Welfare; Economic Factors; Elementary Secondary Education; *Employed Parents; *Employment Patterns; Family Life; Parent Child Relationship; Parent Education; Welfare Recipients; *Welfare Reform
IDENTIFIERS	Personal Responsibility and Work Opp Recon Act; *Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

ABSTRACT

The 1996 welfare reform act forced many poor parents into the labor market, with little understanding of how the parents' workforce participation would affect family life in general and their children in particular. In this paper, researchers examine the relationship between parental workforce participation, welfare receipt, and children's academic outcomes for a random sample of welfare mothers and their children. The findings show that children whose parents transitioned from not working in Wave 1 to working in Wave 2 were significantly more likely to be achieving academically--receiving As and Bs--at Wave 2. Parental employment at Wave 2 was not found to be a positive factor in all cases, however. Researchers found that children whose parents were employed in both waves were significantly less likely to receive As and Bs at Wave 2 than were children whose parents transitioned from not working to working. Researchers also found that receiving welfare during Wave 2 had a positive relationship with receiving As and Bs at Wave 2, which suggests that welfare payments may be a protective factor for families. The researchers argue that parental employment may be beneficial for children's academic achievement, particularly if families are able to continue receiving welfare benefits. (Contains 23 references.) (SM)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 478 283

DRAFT 110602: PLEASE DO NOT CITE WITHOUT PERMISSION

WP-02-33

Institute for Policy Research Working Paper

The Impact of Welfare Reform on Academic Outcomes: Does Parental Work Boost Grades?

Amber Stitziel Pareja

Dan A. Lewis

Institute for Policy Research
Northwestern University
2040 Sheridan Road
Evanston, IL 60208

847-467-3042

Submitted to:
The Institute for Policy Research
Working Papers Series
November 6, 2002

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

P. Reese
Inst. for Policy Research

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
✓ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

UD 035 811

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Abstract

The 1996 welfare reform forced many poor parents into the labor market, with little understanding of how the parents' workforce participation would affect family life in general and the children in particular. In this paper, we examine the relationship between parental workforce participation, welfare receipt, and children's academic outcomes for a random sample of welfare mothers and their children. Our findings show that children whose parents transitioned from not working in Wave 1 to working in Wave 2 were significantly more likely to be achieving academically – receiving A's and B's – at Wave 2. Parental employment at Wave 2 was not found to be a positive factor in all cases, however. We found that children whose parents were employed in both waves were significantly less likely to receive A's and B's at Wave 2 than were children whose parents transitioned from not working to working. We also found that receiving welfare during Wave 2 had a positive relationship with receiving A's and B's at Wave 2, which suggests that welfare payments may be a protective factor for families. We argue that parental employment may be beneficial for children's academic achievement, particularly if families are able to continue receiving welfare benefits.

The Impact of Welfare Reform on Academic Outcomes: Does Parental Work Boost Grades?

Introduction

In 1996, the United States Congress passed the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA), replacing the old, more lenient welfare system, Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) with a new, stricter welfare system, Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF). Various changes in the welfare system and parental participation in the workforce brought about by PRWORA are likely to have a large effect on the families who receive public assistance. These TANF policies could leave families better off, worse off or the same as they were under AFDC depending on exactly how the policies affect their lives.

From AFDC to TANF

In 1996, PRWORA obligated each state to develop and implement a public assistance program to insure that fewer families would receive cash assistance and that 80% of its adult welfare recipients would move into the workforce. The act ended poor families' entitlement to receive cash assistance. Under AFDC, families that met income criteria were entitled to receive federal assistance regardless of the work status of the adult(s) in the family; AFDC recipients were not required to work. According to new TANF policies, families that are eligible are not entitled to receive benefits; they must fulfill certain work requirements. For example, in the State of Illinois a TANF recipient who is the sole adult in the family must work at least thirty hours a week in order to continue to receive welfare payments; two parent families must complete a minimum of thirty-five hours of work a week.

PRWORA also put in place a number of time limits and sanctions that had not existed in the old welfare system. Since the AFDC system was based on entitlement, families were not sanctioned and could receive cash assistance for an unlimited amount of time. Under TANF,

however, families that do not comply with the work requirements are sanctioned and their benefits are taken away. TANF recipients are only able to receive federal cash assistance for up to sixty months during their lifetime, although states may exempt up to twenty percent of their caseload from time limits. Also, states may use their own funds to provide cash assistance to families that meet certain criteria. For example, in the State of Illinois a single parent who works a minimum of thirty hours a week may receive more than sixty months of cash assistance. As long as s/he fulfills the work requirement and income criteria the State of Illinois will continue to provide him/her with cash assistance.

Between 1993 and 1999, the number of welfare recipients in the United States was reduced by fifty-six percent (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2000), and welfare reform has generally been heralded as a great success. In spite of the overwhelming public support for welfare reform, however, many of its consequences remain unknown as of yet. We have yet to find out how welfare reform will affect TANF recipients in general and the academic outcomes of the children of recipients in particular.

TANF and Children's Academic Achievement

Applying the life-course perspective to the families, the principle of "linked lives" states that the lives of the parents and children "are lived interdependently, and social and historical influences are expressed through this network of shared relationships" (Elder, 1998, p. 4). Thus, policies aimed at recipients' workforce participation and welfare receipt – such as TANF – will inevitably affect the recipients' children in a number of ways as well.

The work requirement, for example, may lead many mothers to work full-time. Some research has shown that maternal employment among poor women has positive or neutral effects on children's academic outcomes (Moore and Driscoll, 1997; Morris et al., 2001; Zaslow and Emig, 1997). The positive and neutral effects, however, may depend on the wage-level earned

by the parent (Moore and Driscoll, 1997) as well as the occupational complexity of the parent's job (Menaghan and Parcel, 1995; Parcel and Menaghan, 1997).

Work requirements under PRWORA may also lead parents to become less involved in their children's education, thereby affecting their children's academic performance. Parental involvement has been shown to have a positive affect on children's academic achievement (Bogenschneider, 1997; Izzo et al., 1999). At least part of the positive effect of parental involvement on academic achievement has been shown to be related to school-related activities that take place in the home (Ho and Willms, 1996). Single mothers who participate in low-wage work have a difficult time balancing the demands of parenting and work (Edin and Lein, 1997). Thus, single parents who work at least thirty hours a week, as is required under TANF, will most likely have fewer opportunities to be actively involved in their children's schooling, which may negatively affect their children's academic outcomes.

The timing of parental employment also affects children's academic achievement. Another principle of the life-course perspective states that "the developmental impact of a succession of life transitions or events is contingent on when they occur in a person's life" (Elder, 1998, p. 3). While evaluations of welfare-to-work programs found that mandatory parental employment had mostly positive and neutral effects on the academic achievement of elementary school-age children, the two programs that looked at adolescent outcomes found that mandatory parental employment had some rather unfavorable effects on adolescent children's achievement (Morris et al., 2001).

Parental employment and/or loss of cash benefits may also lead to a change in family income. Many studies have shown that living in poverty is associated with negative cognitive and academic outcomes for children (e.g., Collins and Aber, 1997; Duncan et al., 1998; Guo, 1998). Research has also shown that a raised level of family income is associated with positive

effects on children's academic performance (Smith et al., 1997). Thus, an increase or decrease in family income due to employment and/or loss of welfare benefits could positively or negatively impact children's academic achievement.

Although it is too early to tell exactly how TANF policies may affect children's academic outcomes, studies of welfare-to-work and antipoverty programs may shed some light on the subject. Many welfare-to-work programs experimented with income supplements, mandatory employment, and time limits, all of which exist in the policies currently in place under TANF. Morris et al. (2001) look at how several welfare-to-work and antipoverty programs affected the parents and children in the studies. The studies randomly assigned AFDC recipients to either the experimental mandatory work or income supplement group or the control group. Random assignment insures that any differences between outcomes of the experimental and control groups are not due to any preexisting variations between the groups prior to the study. Thus, such studies better illustrate how some of the current TANF policies, such as mandatory employment, income disregards, and time limits, may affect participants and their adolescent children than do studies of voluntary work among current or former AFDC recipients. The evaluations of the programs looked at parental and child outcomes of the control and experimental groups between two and four years after the programs were implemented.

Many of the parental outcomes of the studies were either positive or neutral (Morris et al., 2001). The studies that provided income supplements—similar to the income disregards in TANF policies—were found to increase employment primarily among long-term welfare recipients, increase family income, and reduce poverty (Morris et al., 2001). Programs that had a mandatory employment component—similar to the mandatory employment component in TANF policies—tended to increase parental employment and reduce welfare receipt, although the programs did not increase family income in general (Morris et al., 2001). The one program that

implemented time limits—similar to the time limits found in TANF policies—was shown to increase employment and decrease welfare receipt, and the "time limits seem to have offset any income gains resulting from [the] earnings supplement" (Morris et al., 2001, p. 4-1). Thus, welfare-to-work programs provide evidence that TANF policies will most likely increase maternal employment, and that states that provide income disregards but no time limits will likely increase family income, although many families still remain well below the poverty line even with the disregards.

In terms of maternal depression and parenting, however, parental outcomes in the studies were less positive. A few of the studies showed that parents from the experimental groups invested more "in structured programs for their children outside of the home," or "parental gatekeeping" (Duncan and Chase-Lansdale, 2000, p 18). Other than parental gatekeeping there were almost no differences between the control and experimental groups in parenting practices such as parental control, family routines, and harsh parenting (Duncan and Chase-Lansdale, 2000). In relation to maternal depression, the experiments showed that "work preparation or employment itself did little to improve mothers' mental health" (Duncan and Chase-Lansdale, 2000, p. 18). Therefore, the welfare-to-work programs show little evidence that current TANF policies will either positively or negatively affect the parenting practices and mental health status of TANF recipients.

Although welfare-to-work programs found mostly positive and neutral effects of the programs on elementary school-age children, the two programs that looked at adolescent outcomes found some rather unfavorable effects of the programs on adolescent children (Morris et al., 2001). Welfare-to-work programs provide evidence that even if there is an increase family income through income disregards, TANF policies will most likely have negative effects on many adolescent outcomes, such as achievement, school behavior problems, and minor

delinquent activity (i.e., smoking and drinking) (Morris et al., 2000; Duncan and Chase-Lansdale, 2000). However, there is no evidence that TANF policies will increase teen pregnancy or serious delinquent activity (i.e., arrests).

In this paper, we hypothesize that a number of TANF policies, including the 30-hour-per-week work requirement and 60-month time-limit, will affect children's academic outcomes through their impact on parents' workforce participation and welfare receipt. We also theorize that parents' workforce participation and welfare receipt will have differential affects on children according to their age, with younger children being more impacted by changes in family income due to parent's workforce participation and welfare receipt and adolescents being more impacted by the amount of time parents spend at work.

Method

Sample and Procedures

The data used in this study is taken from the first two waves of the Illinois Families Study (IFS). The IFS is a six-year panel study of families who were receiving TANF during September, October, and November 1998. A stratified random sample of families was selected along two geographic regions: Cook County and eight counties in "downstate" Illinois. Together, these nine counties were representative of 75 percent of the state TANF caseload. The study oversampled families from the eight downstate counties in order to ensure sufficient samples sizes within smaller counties. This design enables comparisons between a larger metropolitan area (Cook County) and less populated regions in the state.

The core of the IFS is data from annual survey interviews. Wave 1 interviews were completed with a total of 1,363 families during the first wave of the study from late 1999 to early 2000. The overall response rate was 72 percent. The second wave of data collection was concluded in September of 2001 with a total of 1,183 families and a response rate of 87 percent.

Of the children of the survey respondents, 1,582 were of school age (six to eighteen years-old) during both Wave 1 and Wave 2. Children from families that have only one school-aged child were all selected for our sample, and one child per family was selected at random from families with more than one school-aged child. The final full sample used for this study consists of 649 children who were in first through twelfth grades during both waves of data collection.

For the analysis of the survey data, an "analysis weight" was developed to adjust for the non-proportional nature of the sample and the differences in non-response rates across various known demographic characteristics of the population. The results reported in this study are based on an "adjusted sample" using the analysis weights.

Measures

The dependent variable for the analysis is parental report of the child receiving A's and B's on his/her report card in Wave 2. Respondents were asked: "On this child's last report card, did s/he receive mostly…A's and B's, B's and C's, C's and D's, or D's and F's?" Children whose parents reported they received A's and B's were given a value of "1" whereas those whose parents reported they received any of the other categories were given a value of "0."

The independent variable of interest was change in parental work status from Wave 1 to Wave 2. Respondents answered the following question in both waves of data collection: "Are you currently working for pay?" For this study, respondents were placed into one of four mutually exclusive categories: not working during Wave 1 and working during Wave 2; working during both Wave 1 and Wave 2; working during Wave 1 and not working during Wave 2; and not working during both Wave 1 and Wave 2.

Control variables included in the model include various child, parent, and family and neighborhood characteristics and factors known to be associated with academic achievement. The child characteristics and factors consist of gender, race/ethnicity, Wave 1 age, health status, Wave 1 grades, Wave 1 excessive absenteeism, Wave 1 changed schools, and Wave 1 externalizing problem behavior. Race/ethnicity was coded as non-Hispanic white, African American, Hispanic, and other. Age of the children was categorized into two groups: non-adolescents (ages 6 to 10) and adolescents (ages 11 to 18). Health status was given as a five-category ordinal scale with the categories consisting of: poor, fair, good, very good, and excellent. Wave 1 grades, similar to the dependent variable of Wave 2 grades, was broken down into A's and B's versus others. Wave 1 excessive absenteeism was a dichotomous variable coded as "1" if the child was absent from school for one or more weeks and "0" if the child missed less than a week of school during the school year. Similarly, Wave 1 changed schools was a dichotomous variable coded as "1" if the child changed schools one or more times and "0" if the child did not change schools during the school year. Lastly, Wave 1 externalizing problem behavior was the average of the parental report of the six-item scale of Externalizing Problems from the Social Skills Rating Scale.

The parent characteristics and factors included in the model consist of education, marital status, grade retention, and depression. Education was measured as the highest grade the respondent had completed. Marital status was broken into four categories: never married, married/still living together, divorced/separated, and widowed. Grade retention was a dichotomous variable coded as "1" if the respondent reported having ever been retained a grade and "0" if the respondent had never been retained a grade when they were in school. Depression was assessed using an abbreviated 12-item version of the Center for Epidemiological Studies

Depression Scale (CES-D). Respondents who had a score of 10 or more (maximum = 36) were characterized as being depressed those who scored 9 or less were considered not depressed.

The family and neighborhood characteristics and factors included in the model consist of Wave 1 and Wave 2 welfare receipt, region of residence, school-age siblings in household, Wave 1 parenting, Wave 1 annual income, Wave 1 hardship, Wave 1 housing problems, Wave 1 neighborhood satisfaction, and Wave 1 neighborhood safety. Wave 1 and Wave 2 welfare receipt was measured in two separate, dichotomous variables coded as "1" if the respondent reported currently receiving welfare or TANF benefits and "0" if the respondent reported not currently receiving benefits. Region of residence was classified as living in Cook County or in a downstate county. The variable for school age siblings was measured as "1" if there was more than one school-aged child living in the household. Parenting was measured using three different scales: an 8-item scale measuring stress developed for the Women's Employment Study using items from the Parenting Stress Index and the New Chance Study, the 7-item Parent-Child Conflict Tactics Scale-Revised measuring disciplinary style, and a 5-item scale assessing parental warmth. Annual income was measured on a fifteen-category ordinal scale with the categories ranging from less than $2,500 to $50,000 or more. Respondents who reported one or more hardships (i.e., evicted from home/apartment, had gas turned off, etc.) were considered to have experienced hardship. Respondents who reported two or more housing problems (i.e., a leaky roof, broken windows, etc.) were considered to have a housing problem. Respondents who replied that they were somewhat or very satisfied with their current neighborhood as a place to live and raise children were categorized as having neighborhood satisfaction. Finally, respondents who said they felt somewhat or very safe being alone outside in their current neighborhood at night were considered to have neighborhood safety.

For the general characteristics of the sample, please refer to Table 1 below.

Table 1 / Characteristics of Children in the IFS Sample by Parents' Wave 1 and Wave 2 Work Status (Weighted)[a]

Variables	Full Sample	No Work/ Work	Work/ Work	Work/ No Work	No Work/ No Work
Outcome					
Wave 2 A's & B's	.39 (.49)	.52 (.50)	.36 (.48)	.42 (.50)	.34 (.48)
Independent Variables					
Parent's Work Status					
No Work/Work	.16 (.37)				
Work/Work	.39 (.49)				
Work/No Work	.14 (.35)				
No Work/No Work	.31 (.46)				
Child's Characteristics					
Female	.53 (.50)	.67 (.47)	.54 (.50)	.51 (.50)	.45 (.50)
Non-Hispanic Black	.81 (.39)	.81 (.39)	.80 (.40)	.83 (.38)	.83 (.38)
Latino	.11 (.31)	.12 (.33)	.12 (.33)	.15 (.36)	.06 (.25)
Non-Hispanic White	.06 (.23)	.06 (.24)	.07 (.25)	.02 (.15)	.06 (.24)
Other	.02 (.13)	.00 (.00)	.01 (.08)	.00 (.04)	.05 (.22)
Adolescent	.32 (.47)	.34 (.48)	.35 (.48)	.29 (.46)	.29 (.46)
Health Status (Wave 1)	4.04 (1.01)	4.25 (.91)	4.04 (.97)	4.19 (.91)	3.86 (1.12)
Wave 1 A's and B's	.45 (.50)	.59 (.49)	.42 (.50)	.42 (.50)	.42 (.50)
Excessive Absences (Wave 1)	.15 (.36)	.14 (.34)	.12 (.32)	.14 (.35)	.21 (.41)
Changed Schools (Wave 1)	.20 (.40)	.27 (.45)	.12 (.32)	.17 (.37)	.29 (.45)

Table 1 (Continued)

Variables	Full Sample	No Work/ Work	Work/ Work	Work/ No Work	No Work/ No Work
Child Characteristics (Continued)					
SSRS Average	1.43	1.32	1.37	1.52	1.51
	(.45)	(.33)	(.38)	(.53)	(.53)
Parent's Characteristics					
Education	11.74	11.64	12.24	11.62	11.21
(Years)	(1.76)	(1.61)	(1.53)	(2.15)	(1.74)
Never Married	.59	.53	.57	.63	.62
	(.49)	(.50)	(.50)	(.49)	(.49)
Still Married	.08	.07	.09	.08	.07
	(.27)	(.25)	(.28)	(.27)	(.25)
Divorced or	.32	.39	.32	.29	.29
Separated	(.47)	(.49)	(.47)	(.46)	(.46)
Widowed	.02	.02	.03	.00	.02
	(.14)	(.14)	(.16)	(.00)	(.14)
Ever Retained a	.22	.13	.22	.17	.29
Grade in School	(.42)	(.33)	(.42)	(.38)	(.45)
Symptoms of Depression	.24	.30	.14	.22	.35
(Wave 1)	(.43)	(.46)	(.34)	(.42)	(.48)
Family & Neighborhood Characteristics					
Receiving Welfare	.54	.59	.44	.46	.68
(Wave 1)	(.50)	(.49)	(.50)	(.50)	(.47)
Receiving Welfare	.33	.33	.20	.37	.46
(Wave 2)	(.47)	(.47)	(.40)	(.49)	(.50)
Reside in Cook	.91	.93	.87	.92	.95
County	(.29)	(.25)	(.34)	(.27)	(.23)
School-Age Siblings	.60	.65	.60	.58	.58
	(.49)	(.48)	(.49)	(.50)	(.50)
Parenting Stress	15.65	16.02	15.69	15.55	15.46
(Wave 1)	(4.20)	(4.15)	(4.25)	(4.30)	(4.12)
Parenting Discipline	17.48	17.33	17.44	17.39	17.66
(Wave 1)	(2.48)	(2.42)	(2.39)	(2.89)	(2.43)
Parenting Warmth	13.36	13.30	13.18	13.12	13.72
(Wave 1)	(2.37)	(1.93)	(2.33)	(2.19)	(2.68)
Respondent Income	5.01	4.00	6.24	5.15	3.91
Range (Wave 1)	(2.89)	(2.40)	(3.00)	(2.93)	(2.28)

Table 1 (Continued)

Variables	Full Sample	No Work/ Work	Work/ Work	Work/ No Work	No Work/ No Work
Family & Neighborhood Characteristics (Continued)					
Hardship (Wave 1)	.66 (.47)	.71 (.46)	.60 (.49)	.65 (.48)	.72 (.45)
Housing Problems (Wave 1)	.38 (.49)	.41 (.49)	.32 (.47)	.39 (.49)	44 (.50)
Neighborhood Satisfaction (Wave 1)	.69 (.46)	.59 (.49)	.72 (.45)	.73 (.45)	.69 (.46)
Neighborhood Safety (Wave 1)	.62 (.49)	.62 (.49)	.65 (.48)	.65 (.48)	.57 (.50)

Source: Data on the 649 children were taken from Wave 1 and Wave 2 of the Illinois Families Study Survey.

a. The values given are means and the values in parentheses are standard deviations. All analyses were conducted on all 649 children in the sample and were weighted by the analysis weight.

Results

The Effect of Parental Work on Academic Achievement

Table 2 shows estimated odds ratios from logistic regressions predicting the likelihood of the child receiving A's and B's among the study population. This analysis uses four models to consider the effects of parental employment on children's academic achievement. Model 1 through Model 3 examines the effects of other covariates that have been shown to be related to academic outcomes in previous research such as child, parent, and family and neighborhood factors and characteristics. Once these factors are controlled for, we examine the effect of parental employment in Model 4. The estimated effects for all models are expressed as changes in the odds of being employed relative to a baseline group while controlling for other factors included in the model.

Model 1, which includes a set of child characteristics and factors as independent variables, shows that the relative odds of receiving A's and B's for girls are 1.46. In other words, girls are about 46 percent (1.00 + .46) more likely to receive A's and B's than are boys

controlling for differences between the two groups in racial/ethnic mix, age, health status, having received A's and B's in Wave 1, Wave 1 excessive absenteeism, Wave 1 changing schools, and Wave 1 externalizing problem behavior. In Model 1, there also is a significant age effect where adolescents are less likely to receive A's and B's than younger children. Children who received A's and B's in Wave 1 show significantly higher likelihood of receiving A's and B's in Wave 2. There are no significant affects for race/ethnicity factors, health status, excessive absenteeism, changing schools, or externalizing problem behavior.

Model 2 adds parent characteristics and factors and shows strong effects of two of these variables on the likelihood of children receiving A's and B's in Wave 2. Children whose parents were ever retained a grade in school were 47 percent less likely to have received A's and B's than those whose parents had never been retained. Those children whose parents reported having symptoms of depression were also at significant disadvantage for receiving A's and B's – they are about half as likely as those children whose parents were not depressed to be achieving academically. Other parent variables – education and marital status – were not statistically significant. With the addition of the parent characteristic and factors variables, most of the effects of the other variables in the model are not changed significantly. Once the parent variables are entered the externalizing problem behavior becomes statistically significant, suggesting that the addition of parent variables creates a more highly-specified model.

Model 3 adds family and neighborhood characteristics and factors. While the addition of these variables to the model does not change the effects of the other variables in any significant way, there are statistically significant effects of welfare receipt in Wave 2 on the likelihood of receiving A's and B's at Wave 2. Those children whose families were receiving welfare at Wave 2 were 71 percent more likely to have received A's and B's on their report cards than those children whose families were not receiving welfare at Wave 2. There are no significant

Table 2 Estimated Odds Ratios Predicting Likelihood of Receiving A's and B's in Wave 2

Variables	Model 1 Odds Ratio	Model 2 Odds Ratio	Model 3 Odds Ratio	Model 4 Odds Ratio
Child Characteristics				
Female	1.46*	1.57*	1.54*	1.48*
Black (excluded)	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Latino	.77	.71	.73	.71
Non-Hispanic White	.77	.88	.80	.78
Other	.70	.74	.58	.71
Adolescent	.54**	.49**	.47**	.47**
Health Status (Wave 1)	.95	.91	.94	.92
Wave 1 A's and B's	5.42***	5.26***	5.22***	5.10***
Excessive Absences (Wave 1)	.74	.68	.65	.64
Changed Schools (Wave 1)	.68	.69	.70	.67
SSRS Average	1.39	1.78**	1.96**	2.01**
Parent's Characteristics				
Education (Years)		1.02	1.05	1.05
Never Married (excluded)		1.00	1.00	1.00
Still Married		.73	.88	.83
Divorced or Separated		1.18	1.26	1.23
Widowed		3.32	3.84	3.86
Ever Retained a Grade in School		.53**	.54*	.57*
Wave 1 Symptoms of Depression		.51**	.48**	.46**
Family & Neighborhood Characteristics				
Receiving Welfare (Wave 1)			.79	.81

Table 2 (Continued)

Variables	Model 1 Odds Ratio	Model 2 Odds Ratio	Model 3 Odds Ratio	Model 4 Odds Ratio
Family & Neighborhood Characteristics (Cont.)				
Receiving Welfare (Wave 2)			1.71*	1.71*
Reside in Cook County			.96	.91
School-Age Siblings			.84	.81
Parenting Stress (Wave 1)			1.00	1.00
Parenting Discipline (Wave 1)			.99	.99
Parenting Warmth (Wave 1)			.96	.97
Respondent Income Range (Wave 1)			.93	.94
Hardship (Wave 1)			1.02	.99
Housing Problems (Wave 1)			.81	.82
Neighborhood Satisfaction (Wave 1)			1.01	1.07
Neighborhood Safety (Wave 1)			1.40	1.38
Parental Work Status				
No Work/Work (excluded)				1.00
Work/Work				.55*
Work/No Work				.66
No Work/No Work				.53*

*p < .05
**p < .01
***p < .001

Sources: Results are odds ratios from logistic regression models using data on 649 children and their parents from the IFS.

effects for receiving welfare at Wave 1, residence in Cook County, other school-age siblings, parenting variables, annual income, hardship, housing problems, neighborhood satisfaction, or neighborhood safety.

Finally, Model 4 adds the parental work categories. While the addition of parental employment to the model does not change the effects of the other variables in any significant way, there are statistically significant effects of changes in parental employment from Wave 1 to Wave 2 on the likelihood of receiving A's and B's at Wave 2. Compared to children whose parents were not working in Wave 1 and were working in Wave 2, there were significant effects for children whose parents either worked or did not work during both waves. Children whose parents worked both waves were 45 percent less likely to have received A's and B's than were children whose parents did not work in Wave 1 and worked in Wave 2. Similarly, children whose parents did not work in both waves were 47 percent less likely to have received A's and B's than were children whose parents did not work in Wave 1 and worked in Wave 2. There were no significant effects for the group of children whose parents worked in Wave 1 and did not work in Wave 2.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine the effect of TANF polices, including the work requirement and time-limit, on children's academic achievement. Overall, our findings show that children whose parents transitioned from not working in Wave 1 to working in Wave 2 were significantly more likely to be achieving academically – or receiving A's and B's – at Wave 2. We established a temporal order in the relationship between parental employment and academic achievement by controlling for factors related to achievement at Wave 1 and including parental work transitions in a model predicting academic achievement at Wave 2. We found that children whose parents entered the workforce between Wave 1 and Wave 2 were significantly

more likely to receive A's and B's at Wave 2. This suggests there is a potential causal relationship between parental work and children's academic achievement.

There are a number of reasons why parental work would boost academic achievement. Especially among those families who continued to receive welfare benefits as a supplement to income earned through employment, parental work could provide the child with more stability, a daily routine, a positive parental role model. Parental employment can also lead to improved psychological well-being for the parent, which could lead to better parenting as well as improved outcomes for the child (Huston, 2002; Zaslow et al., 2001).

Parental employment at Wave 2 was not found to be a positive factor in all cases, however. Children whose parents were employed in both waves were significantly less likely to receive A's and B's at Wave 2 than were children whose parents transitioned from not working to working. This finding may be due to increased negative effects of low-wage work over time. Those parents who began working between Wave 1 and Wave 2 most likely have not been employed long enough to have experienced the grind of low-wage work over time. On the other hand, parents who worked in both waves may have already experienced the dead-end, precarious nature of the only jobs that they and many other recent welfare recipients are able to find (Edin and Lein, 1997). Thus, those children whose parents worked both waves may have adversely been affected by their parents' long-term low-wage work.

We found a number of other factors to be significant predictors of children's academic achievement. We found that academic achievement decreases with age, and that girls are more likely to receive A's and B's than boys. Not surprisingly, we also found a strong relationship between academic achievement in Wave 1 and receiving A's and B's in Wave 2. Children whose parents had never been retained a grade in school were more likely to achieve academically than were children whose parents had been retained a grade in school. Contrary to

what we expected to find, we found a positive relationship between having externalizing problem behavior and academic achievement. Although this result is counterintuitive, it may signify that children who exhibit more problem behavior receive more attention from their parents and/or their teachers. This attention could lead to greater academic achievement. Further research is needed to test this hypothesis, however.

Two of the other factors found to be predictive of academic achievement are related to parent characteristics. Children whose parents were ever retained a grade in school were significantly less likely to receive A's and B's than were children whose parents had never been retained. Parents who were retained in school are likely to have lower educational levels than are parents who were not retained and, therefore, are most likely less able to provide academic support for their children (Lareau, 2000). Also, children whose parents reported symptoms of depression in Wave 1 are less likely to achieve academically than are children whose parents were not depressed. Parental depression has consistently been found to be negatively associated with child outcomes.

Our finding that receiving welfare during Wave 2 had a positive relationship with receiving A's and B's at Wave 2 suggests that welfare payments may be a protective factor for families. Although we cannot make a causal argument since both were Wave 2 variables, this finding should be looked at more carefully over time. In line with previous research on welfare-to-work programs, the finding seems to provide evidence that employment coupled with income supplements – in the form of welfare payments – may be lead to positive outcomes for families. In addition to identifying the amount of income supplements (welfare payments) families receive, future research should take into account the amount of the number of hours worked, wages, job stability, and benefits in order to identify the specific aspects of parental employment that lead to increased academic achievement.

Limitations of the Present Study

This study has a number of limitations. One of the primary limitations is our measure of academic achievement. Since our measure is based on parental report of children's grades, the children's reported grades may not entirely match up with their actual grades. Parents' reports may be affected by other events that are simultaneously occurring in their lives (i.e., returning to work), which may lead parents to either inflate or deflate their report of how their children are doing academically. Also, the variable we used is an ordinal variable with overlapping categories. Thus, the four categories – A's and B's, B's and C's, C's and D's, and D's and F's – are not mutually exclusive and may be misleading. If a child gets all B's, for example, it is not clear if the parent should report that the child gets "A's and B's" or "B's and C's," which could lead to an error in measurement.

Another limitation is our measure of work. Since the measure we used does not differentiate between full time and part time work, we are unable to look at how different amounts of formal work (i.e., 25 hours versus 40 hours) affect academic achievement. Also, our measure of parental employment is a point-in-time measure of employment status which only identifies respondents as workers if they were currently working for pay at the time of the interview. Thus, it does not account for recent or anticipated employment. However, since most of the variables used in the analyses were also point-in-time measurements, it would not have made sense to use a more all-encompassing measure of employment.

A final limitation of the present study is that we were unable to control for parental involvement in the children's schooling since the survey does not contain a measurement of parental involvement. Some research has claimed that different aspects of strong parental involvement are associated with positive academic outcomes for children (Henderson and Berla, 1994; Epstein, 1991), and many researchers and educators have endorsed parental involvement

as a crucial factor to children's academic success (Faucette, 2000; U.S. Department of Education, 1994). Parents who are more involved in their children's schooling may also be more likely to report them as achieving academically. Thus, by not having a measurement of parental involvement we may be attributing aspects of academic achievement to parental employment when these aspects should actually be attributed to parents' involvement in their children's schooling.

Conclusion

Previous research has been inconclusive as to the effect of TANF policies, including mandatory parental employment, on children's academic outcomes. The majority of this research has been completed on subjects who voluntarily became employed or who participated in welfare-to-work programs. The present study provides evidence that parents becoming employed may positively affect children's academic outcomes, particularly for those families who are able to keep their welfare benefits while employed. In order to establish our causal claim, we will need to complete additional research with future waves of data.

Our study suggests that parental employment may be beneficial for children's academic achievement, particularly if families are able to continue receiving welfare benefits. Although the impact of low-wage work over time may be negative, we posit that policymakers should attempt to facilitate employment through providing various work supports (i.e., child care) and benefits (i.e., medical benefits).

According to our findings, work alone may not lead to positive academic outcomes for children. In fact, low-wage work over time may actually detract from children's academic achievement due to the role-strains that poor working parents experience. Thus, we argue that families should be able to continue receiving their welfare payments as a supplement to their income earned through employment.

Finally, we are not positing that all individuals who are still receiving welfare benefits should be forced to work full-time in low-wage jobs. Clearly, the amount of time parents spend with their children also greatly affects their children's academic achievement. We suggest that, in addition to participating in the workforce, parents' roles in their children's lives should also be recognized. Thus, parents should perhaps be able to fulfill part of their work requirements through participating in various activities with their children (i.e., volunteering at their children's schools, etc.).

References

Bogenschneider, Karen. 1997. "Parental Involvement in Adolescent Schooling: A Proximal Process with Transcontextual Validity." *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 59:718-33.

Collins, Ann and J. Lawrence Aber. 1997. *How Welfare Reform Can Help or Hurt Children.* New York, NY: National Center for Children in Poverty.

Duncan, G. J. and Chase-Lansdale, P. L. 2000. "Welfare Reform and Child Well-Being" JCPR Working Paper.

Duncan, Greg J., W. Jean Yeung, Jeanne Brooks-Gunn and Judith R. Smith. 1998. "How Much Does Childhood Poverty Affect the Life Chances of Children?" *American Sociological Review* 63:406-423.

Edin, Kathryn and Laura Lein. 1997. *Making Ends Meet: How Single Mothers Survive Welfare and Low-Wage Work.* New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Elder, Jr., Glen H. 1998. "The Life Course as Developmental Theory." *Child Development* 69:1-12.

Epstein, Joyce L. 1991. "Effects on Student Achievement of Teachers' Practices of Parent Involvement." Pp. 261-276 in *Literacy through Family, Community, and School Interaction*, edited by Steven B. Silvern. Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.

Faucette, Eileen. 2000. "Are You Missing the Most Important Ingredient? A Recipe for Increasing Achievement." *Multimedia Schools* 7(6):56-61.

Guo, Guang. 1998. "The Timing of the Influences of Cumulative Poverty on Children's Cognitive Ability and Achievement." *Social Forces* 77:257-287.

Henderson, Anne T. and Nancy Berla. 1994. *A New Generation of Evidence: The Family is Critical to Student Achievement.* Washington, DC: National Committee for Citizens in Education.

Ho, Sui-Chu Esther and J. Douglas Willms. 1996. "Effects of Parental Involvement on Eighth-Grade Achievement." *Sociology of Education* 69:126-41.

Huston, Aletha C. 2002. "Reforms and Child Development." *The Future of Children* 12: 59-77.

Izzo, Charles V., Roger P. Weissberg, and Wesley J. Kasprow. 1999. "A Longitudinal Assessment of Teacher Perceptions of Parent Involvement in Children's Education and School Performance." *American Journal of Community Psychology* 27:817-839.

Lareau, Annette. 2000. *Home Advantage: Social Class and Parental Intervention in Elementary Education, Second Edition.* Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

Menaghan, E. G. and Parcel, T. L. 1995. "Social Sources of Change in Children's Home Environments: The Effects of Parental Occupational Experiences and Family Conditions." *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 57:69-84.

Moore, Kristin M. and Anne K. Driscoll. 1997. "Low-Wage Maternal Employment and Outcomes for Children: A Study." *The Future of Children* 7:122-127.

Morris, P. A., Huston, A. C., Duncan, G. J., Crosby, D. A., and Bos, J. M. 2001. *How Welfare and Work Policies Affect Children: A Synthesis of Research*. New York: Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation.

Parcel, T. L. and Menaghan, E. G. 1997. "Effects of Low-Wage Employment on Family Well-Being." *The Future of Children* 7:116-121.

Smith, J. R., Brooks-Gunn, J. and Klebanov, P. K. 1997. "Consequences of Living in Poverty for Young Children's Cognitive and Verbal Ability and Early School Achievement." In *The Consequences of Growing Up Poor*. Edited by G. J. Duncan and J. Brooks-Gunn. New York: Russell Sage.

U.S. Department of Education. 1994. *Strong Families, Strong Schools*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families. 2000. Change in TANF Caseloads. http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/news/stats/case-fam.htm.

Zaslow, Martha J., Elizabeth C. Hair, M. Robin Dion, Surjeet K. Ahluwalia, and Jennifer Sargent. 2001. *Women & Health* 32:211-251.

Zaslow, Martha J. and Carol A. Emig. 1997. "When Low-Income Mothers Go to Work: Implications for Children." *The Future of Children* 7:110-115.

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

UD 035 811

Reproduction Release

(Specific Document)

I. DOCUMENT IDENTIFICATION (Class of Documents):

Title: The Impact of Welfare Reform on Academic Outcomes: Does Parental Work Boost Grades?	
Author(s): Dan A. Lewis and Amber Stitzel Parasa-	
Corporate Source: Institute for Policy Research	Publication Date: 2002

II. REPRODUCTION RELEASE:

In order to disseminate as widely as possible timely and significant materials of interest to the educational community, documents announced in the monthly abstract journal of the ERIC system, Resources in Education (RIE), are usually made available to users in microfiche, reproduced paper copy, and electronic media, and sold through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). Credit is given to the source of each document, and, if reproduction release is granted, one of the following notices is affixed to the document.

If permission is granted to reproduce and disseminate the identified document, please CHECK ONE of the following three options and sign in the indicated space following.

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 1 documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

SAMPLE

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

Level 1

[X]

Check here for Level 1 release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche or other ERIC archival media (e.g. electronic) and paper copy.

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2A documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE, AND IN ELECTRONIC MEDIA FOR ERIC COLLECTION SUBSCRIBERS ONLY, HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

SAMPLE

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

Level 2A

[ ]

Check here for Level 2A release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche and in electronic media for ERIC archival collection subscribers only

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2B documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

SAMPLE

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

Level 2B

[ ]

Check here for Level 2B release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche only

Documents will be processed as indicated provided reproduction quality permits.
If permission to reproduce is granted, but no box is checked, documents will be processed at Level 1.

I hereby grant to the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) nonexclusive permission to reproduce and disseminate this document as indicated above. Reproduction from the ERIC microfiche, or electronic media by persons other than ERIC employees and its system contractors requires permission from the copyright holder. Exception is made for non-profit reproduction by libraries and other service agencies to satisfy information needs of educators in response to discrete inquiries.

Signature:	Printed Name/Position/Title: Patricia REESE, Dir. of Publications and Public Relations	
Organization/Address: IPR 2040 Sheridan Rd. Evanston, IL 60208-4100	Telephone: 847-491-8712	Fax: 847-491-9916
	E-mail Address: p-reese@northwestern.edu	Date: 7/8/03

III. DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY INFORMATION (FROM NON-ERIC SOURCE):

If permission to reproduce is not granted to ERIC, or, if you wish ERIC to cite the availability of the document from another source, please provide the following information regarding the availability of the document. (ERIC will not announce a document unless it is publicly available, and a dependable source can be specified. Contributors should also be aware that ERIC selection criteria are significantly more stringent for documents that cannot be made available through EDRS.)

Publisher/Distributor:
Address:
Price:

IV. REFERRAL OF ERIC TO COPYRIGHT/REPRODUCTION RIGHTS HOLDER:

If the right to grant this reproduction release is held by someone other than the addressee, please provide the appropriate name and address:

Name:
Address:

V. WHERE TO SEND THIS FORM:

Send this form to the following ERIC Clearinghouse:

ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education **Box 40, Teachers College, Columbia University** **525 West 120th Street** **New York, NY 10027**	**Telephone: 212-678-3433** **Toll Free: 800-601-4868** **Fax: 212-678-4012** **http://eric-web.tc.columbia.edu**

EFF-088 (Rev. 2/2000)